



Tab B – Diversity Management within USDA

Recruitment Cadre

USDA has a national team of recruiters who reach into every state and almost every county in the country. This recruitment team is made up of agency recruiters; hundreds of employees who are trained as recruiters as collateral duties, five Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) Liaisons assigned geographically across the country; liaisons assigned to 1890 institutions; tribal liaisons; senior managers and executives who volunteer to participate in major recruitment and outreach activities. This team has helped USDA meet diversity goals and increase employment of underrepresented groups.

USDA's Diversity Advisory Council attended over 70 conferences and conventions throughout the United States to promote USDA's goal of recruiting and retaining a highly skilled, diverse workforce. Among the special emphasis groups represented at these conferences and conventions were American Indian/Alaska Natives.

USDA continues to use a variety of recruitment sources such as the Internet, vocational rehabilitation offices, State employment offices, "one-stop" offices, veteran organizations, colleges, State rehabilitation agencies, private rehabilitation agencies, etc., as outreach and recruitment sources to employ veterans and disabled veterans. Vacancy announcements and recruitment bulletins contain statements, which encourage veterans to apply. USDA continues a partnership with the Department of Veterans Affairs, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment, in order to obtain applications of disabled veterans for employment.

Disability Hiring

On October 1, 2000, USDA implemented a Department-wide plan to hire 9,000 individuals with disabilities over a five-year period ending September 30, 2005. This plan is a direct result of Executive Order 13163 - Increasing the Opportunity for Individuals with Disabilities to be employed in the Federal government. This Executive Order calls for an increase of 100,000 new hires with disabilities over the five-year period. USDA has accepted a challenge and an aggressive goal of hiring 9,000 during this time. At the conclusion of the fourth year of this hiring plan, USDA hired a total of 4,941 individuals with disabilities, of which 534, or 10.8% of the new hires, were individuals with targeted disabilities.

Hispanic Serving Institutions

USDA has taken successful steps to improve representation of Hispanics in its workforce. USDA has accomplished this through increasing participation of Hispanic American

representation at Hispanic-serving school districts, Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI), and other educational institutions. Seeking to be a responsive driving force behind the President's Hispanic Nine-Point Plan, and in creating successful recruitment, retention and promotion practices, USDA has successfully implemented a strategic human capital approach to improve Hispanic representation. Through the USDA- HSI Liaison Officer Program, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) National Internship Program, Public Service Leaders Scholarship Program, and HSI Fellows Program, the Department has worked to close the academic achievement gap among Hispanic Americans, while engaging the Hispanic community in exploring Federal employment opportunities.

The USDA HSI Liaison Officer Program is key to creating linkages between USDA and institutions of higher education. Liaisons play a vital role in making educational and employment programs more accessible to students. Each liaison is currently assigned 40 institutions within their area. Through campus visits, presentations, e-mails, word of mouth, and referrals, they have been able to network with 9,600 students and staff, of which, approximately 85% are Hispanic. Liaisons raise the awareness of USDA opportunities as well as other Federal opportunities available to the students and institutions. This "personal involvement" approach has been instrumental in creating systemic awareness of the employment and educational opportunities available to students at Hispanic Serving Institutions located in: New Mexico, Texas, New York, New Jersey, Florida, California, Washington, Arizona and Colorado.

Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities

In 2004, USDA sponsored ninety-two Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) interns, adding to the over 500 USDA HACU interns since the year 2000. The HACU Internship Program is one of USDA's most effective tools in engaging the Hispanic community with Federal employment. A survey conducted in 2003 to determine the HACU internship program's effectiveness in introducing students to a career in public service found that nearly 90% responded that their experience had assisted them in reaching their educational goals. Former USDA-HACU Interns indicated that more than 21% are now working as permanent USDA employees; 22% work in other Federal, State and local government agencies; and 14% work for non-profit agencies. Additionally, 100% of interns who responded indicated they would consider working for USDA in the future and 96% indicated they would recommend family and friends to pursue employment with USDA. After completing their internship, the students also perform extensive outreach to fellow students on their home campuses promoting career opportunities at USDA and the HACU National Internship Program.

Career Intern Program

USDA has enhanced its internship programs. One is the Career Intern Program, initiated in 2000, which provides a 2-year internship for recent college graduates or skilled professionals. The program includes formal training, structured on-the-job training, rotational assignments, and a mentor. In FY 2003 and 2004, 721 individuals were

appointed through this program, most of whom possessed either a bachelor's or master's degree. USDA converted 75 career interns who completed the internship to permanent positions in 2004. Another important intern program is the Presidential Management Fellows (PMF) Program. It provides a 2-year internship for recent college graduates with advanced degrees interested in public service. USDA currently has 25 PMF's on board.

Public Service Leaders Scholarship Program

The USDA Public Service Leaders Scholarship Program is a highly effective recruitment tool in diversifying the USDA workforce and furthers USDA's strategic human capital plan. In 2004, the first class of the Public Service Leaders Program graduated into full-time permanent employment as Statisticians, International Trade Specialists, Human Resource Specialists, Civil Engineers, and Range Scientists. Currently, 32 undergraduate and graduate students, representing twelve states and twenty-three institutions, are participating in the program. The selected Public Service Leaders receive a full tuition scholarship for two years and prior to graduation, intern with USDA for a minimum of 640 hours. Upon graduation, students commit to work for USDA for a minimum of two years. Participants also receive mentoring, and leadership training. In 2004, the USDA-HSI Fellows Program provided 15 faculty and staff in five states and Puerto Rico with the opportunity to work and study with USDA staff and other Federal agency personnel for a period of four to six weeks.

The program provides the opportunity for participants to learn first-hand about USDA agencies, programs, and services by receiving agency briefings, meeting senior level USDA officials, and networking with other Federal agencies in Washington, DC. The Fellows enrich USDA with their diverse experience and allow for ongoing dialogue regarding the educational challenges facing the Hispanic community. As a result of the program, Fellows have increased their understanding of USDA and other Federal agencies, particularly at the national level, and they have identified mutually collaborative interests to build and compliment USDA programs. USDA staff has become more knowledgeable about the participating institutions in order to develop thorough collaborative approaches. Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) that have sponsored staff to participate in the Fellows program account for over 50% of HSI institutions currently awarded USDA grants. In addition, the HSI Fellows have worked diligently in funneling their students through USDA student programs. Since its inception, sixty-five faculty and administrators from forty-two HSI have completed the USDA-HSI Fellows Program.

USDA/1890 National Scholars Program

USDA/1890 Scholars Program, which was implemented in 1992, is a major effort between USDA and the 1890 Land-Grant Universities and Tuskegee University to award scholarships to students to study agriculture, food, or natural resource sciences and related majors at one of the eighteen institutions. The program helps to strengthen the partnership between USDA and the 1890 institutions; helps to increase the number of students studying agriculture and related disciplines; and offers career opportunities at

USDA. Through the recruiting efforts of the liaison officers, individuals apply for the USDA/1890 National Scholarship. Students selected as USDA/1890 National Scholars become employees of sponsoring agency.

USDA /1994 Land Grant Institutions

The 1994 Land Grant Institutions (1994s) are Native American tribally-controlled colleges and universities that were granted land-grant status under an Act of Congress in 1994. This program is similar in nature to 1890 Land Grant Institutions and its 1890 National Scholars Program. The 1994 Institutions have missions to serve their constituents through higher education programs involving teaching, community outreach, and research. However the 1994s primarily serve Native American populations that are typically located in remote, underserved communities that lack access to higher education. The 1994s also take special care to include cultural relevant curriculum and programs in their institutions so that Native American students and communities can take pride in their cultural and historical identity.

USDA coordinates its partnership with the 1994 Land Grant Institutions through the USDA Office of the Assistant Secretary of Civil Rights (ASCR). The American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) collectively represents all the 1994 Land Grant Institutions by interacting with federal partners, developing national policy, providing public relations services, and offering technical assistance. The Office of ASCR supports the USDA/AIHEC Leadership Group, a national advisory body that provides the strategic direction for the USDA/1994s partnership. ASCR also supports the USDA/AIHEC Liaison, who is responsible for facilitating collaboration between USDA and the 1994 Land Grant Institutions. Further, ASCR coordinates outreach to Native American communities by involving the 1994 Land Grant Institutions. Recruitment efforts are presently being developed.

Examples of Outreach Activities Related to Human Capital Planning - 2005

| No | Type of Activity/Purpose | Events | Audience Targeted |
|-----------|---------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|
|-----------|---------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|

| | | | |
|----|--|---|----------------------------------|
| 1. | Conferences and Career Fairs To promote USDA's Outreach programs and services, its goal to hire and retain a highly diverse workforce, and to promote USDA as an employer of choice, the Office of Outreach and Diversity participated in national conferences, career fairs and other events. Advertisements were placed in conference program and career placement booklets. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 76th League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) Convention (USDA was a Presidential sponsor) ➤ National Image 33rd Annual Convention & Training Conference ➤ National Organization of Mexican American Rights (NOMAR) 8th Annual Training Conference (USDA was a Gold sponsor) ➤ New Mexico State University and University of Texas-El Paso 2005 Career Expo ➤ 1st National Conference of Latino/Hispanic Farmers and Ranchers (USDA was a sponsor) | Hispanic/Latino Americans |
| 2. | Conferences and Career Fairs USDA was a key sponsor at the youth forum, providing youth with greetings and presentations from USDA "characters" <i>Power Panther, Smokey Bear, and Woodsy Owl.</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ LULAC Youth and Collegiate Federal Career Exploration Forum | Hispanic /Latino Americans |
| 3. | Career Fair The Office of Outreach and Diversity will be exhibiting at two career fairs during the week of September 19, 2005. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 2005 Career Expo at New Mexico State University and University of Texas-El Paso (Hispanic Serving Institutions that draw about 2,000 plus candidates at each event) | Hispanic/Latino Americans |
| 4. | Conferences The Office of Outreach and Diversity provided national leadership and coordination in preparation for the conference, was the lead office in developing the student track workshops, and sponsored twelve students to attend and participate in the conference. The conference provided students with opportunities to expand their understanding of issues and challenges facing Latino agriculture communities, increase their understanding of USDA agencies, and interact with USDA representatives and scholars in the field. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ National Association of Hispanic/Latino Farmers and Ranchers (Las Cruces) | Hispanic/Latino youth |

| | | | |
|----|--|--|--------------------------------|
| 5. | <p>Conferences</p> <p>The conference included two full days of training, with keynote addresses, workshops and panel discussions covering the state of Hispanic Americans with respect to employment, education, and civil rights in the U.S. Representatives from the Office of Outreach and Diversity and the Southwest Region of the Forest Service presented <i>Career Opportunities at USDA</i> at the student track workshop.</p> | <p>➤ National Organization for Mexican American Rights (NOMAR, Inc.), 8th Annual Training Conference and Business Meeting (USDA was a Gold Sponsor)</p> | Hispanic/Latino American youth |
| 6. | <p>Conferences</p> <p>A three-day leadership symposium developed to ensure the academic success of approximately 300 local Hispanic students. Potentially at-risk junior and senior high school students accessed information and support about college preparation, financial assistance, leadership, personal development, career option, and demonstrated talents in a speech contest, talent contest and art show.</p> | <p>➤ 2005 Greater Washington Hispanic Youth Symposium (GWHYS) (USDA a silver sponsor)</p> | Hispanic/Latino American Youth |
| 7. | <p>Conferences</p> <p>A year long enrichment program of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) designed to recruit, stimulate, improve and encourage high academic and cultural achievement among African-American high school students. Workshops on career opportunities at USDA were conducted for student and adult participants.</p> | <p>➤ Academic, Cultural, Technological and Scientific Olympics (ACT-SO); [USDA is an ACT-SO partner]</p> | African American Youth |
| 8. | <p>Conferences</p> <p>For the second year, Outreach staff conducted a workshop on employment and program opportunities within USDA. One of the convention keynote addresses was given by a USDA representative, who included information on USDA employment opportunities, services and programs.</p> | <p>➤ Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) Annual Convention</p> | American Americans |

| | | | |
|-----|--|--|---|
| 9. | <p>Conferences</p> <p>Outreach staff served as a keynoter for a sororal group, a new audience for the Department, providing information on USDA programs and career opportunities.</p> | <p>➤ Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. (Southeastern Regional Meeting)</p> | <p>African American Undergraduate Females</p> |
| 10. | <p>Conferences</p> <p>Outreach staff served as the keynoter for this national honor society, a new audience for USDA, providing information on how careers in Family and Consumer Sciences, and being scholars and scientists, relates to the department.</p> | <p>➤ Kappa Omicron Nu Honor Society (Family and Consumer Sciences)</p> | <p>Undergraduate and Graduate Males and Females</p> |

Attachments